

A BEAST IN VIEW

by
Ronald H. Bayes



"Ron Bayes Has Got It!"

—WILLIAM STAFFORD

A BEAST IN VIEW

**SELECTED SHORTER POEMS
1970-1980**

By

RONALD H. BAYES



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All, all of a piece throughout
Thy Chase had a Beast in View;
Thy Wars brought nothing about;
Thy Lovers were all untrue.
'Tis well an Old Age is out,
And time to begin a New.

—John Dryden

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

verse

Cages & Journeys
The Casketmaker
Child Outside My Window
Constructions
Dust & Desire
King of August
The Umapine Tetralogy:
 History of The Turtle
 Porpoise
 Tokyo Annex
 Fram

fiction

Sister City (stories)
Sospensione (novella)

criticism

John Reed & The Limits of Idealism
The Theatre of Yukio Mishima

folios with artists

The Hydari Sequence (w/Sperling)
Chapel Hill Gravel (w/Saltzman)
Paint The Window Purple (w/Saltzman)
Six by Two (w/Saltzman)
Summer Evening: Colorado (w/Burruss)
The Water Mirror (w/Weiss)
Words From The Lithuanian (w/Saltzman)

drama

An Evening With Ezra Pound
An Evening With William Carlos Williams

for
The Friends
Then and Now

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EPILOGUE / Inside Back Cover

I.

TOWARD COLUMBUS

(to Bob Barrows)

*I had now completed the main purpose of
my journey, having visited the various places
connected with the study of Columbus.*

—Washington Irving

AKUREYRI AND SURTSEY

The island thus mentioned by him (Columbus) as Thule is generally supposed to have been Iceland . . .

Washington Irving

I.

“Normally” it would be evening
yet we set out
under a sun,
clouds in a layer
or a deep-dish saucer
over the fjord.
We slice between
two noble mountains
down our road
wind Southward.

On this Occasion,
the last for a long time,
lone bird over rockledge,
lone milk can by a mailpost.
This, I think still my own
home heart wishes.

David drives well
as he did Sunday.
This is his country
and he knows these
rock roads.
Eye gains two mountains,
a sign warns
“Blind Turn.”

Out in the valley
ahead, to the right
vaster mountains.
Peaks and snow and
light is different now.
And the stream manifests and
the cattlebridge arches.

We go the same routes
in a somewhat similar
manner.

Five of us maintain next morning,
Val, Steffany, Steppy, David,
and I with you in my thoughts.

If you were here you might know
some of my heart's
confusion—and fusion.

II.

They call it *The Fall of The Gods*
—with the sun right the water rainbows: so!
where the idols of the Icelanders were all
thrown in after the priests fled to
the far North of the island after the Althing
leadership took the Cross,
accepting the “Christian sin.”

And what Gods fell that day into icewater,
and what Gods rose, cold as snow out of
the roar and the waters' spin
where cries to the ear are drowned!

We lower our voices, give up our jesting.
They call it *The Fall of The Gods*.

III.

The only shoes he had were
dancing shoes
and he walked carefully on gravel.
did Flood Houlihan,
back there in west Canada.

IV.

Get-along on we do.
Ponies.
A white snow pony, wildest of eye
These are the vitals.
The clouds boiling.
David offers me a cigar.
Between rivers
a pool reflects the mountains.
Rocks
like great statues of Trolls

guard the passes
of the road.
There is an island in the lake; lake a
clear mirror. Mirror.
The quiet is total.
And this,
this is the heart.

V.

Leaving. Leaving again. Leaving the third time.
At such times we chatter to not let sentiment
trip us.
Solveig refers to "James Bond." Young Steppy
says "Jimmy Bond would be better. We can't
be so formal." (Thus we stay dry eyed.)

I have gone out only to come into
a greater harmony than I had dreamed,
regardless of new confusions of the heart.

VI.

"Our Season, My Dear, is called vortex."
"Our time is eruption."
"I think of The Fall of the Gods."

THANKSGIVING DAY MONTREAL

I. Reprise on Waking

I could do handstands
I'm so happy to be near you.

I'd hate to
. . . . couldn't cope with
a broken arm
if the handstand botched.

But the dude I didn't want to
won
—15 rounder—
just last week, w/his left hand.

I want happily
to see you, week
from now:
even in *that* crowd.

II. Breakfast

To see how he
looks
at her

Touches her
. . . . the recip-
rocity.

Among us
Anglo types only
Bill Williams

Could have
recorded it
just right.

III. Study

My
amber glass
left.

NOT AS A FOOLISH MAN

(Montreal October)

Thoughts run fast, back and back.
Suddenly a vista, as wind
beats black rain against this
4th floor window.

Pace the floor; write Ragnar in
Iceland, twelve months late.
9 degrees centigrade the
radio tells me after "Disco Duck" in French.

My loves and yearnings are so near
parallel to early youth.
But fifteen vigorous years have spoken.
I cannot bear more repetition

Nor will inflict it save as *leitmotif*,
consciously.
But oh the Places I love now. And how I
would return to you, to you

With the absolute same passions,
the desires somewhat clearer,
& the great hopes still, and still
not as a foolish man.

Wet vista, dark and cold, these
wet feet walk
your streets
with that odd heart maintained.

One of you (colder even than Montreal)
I feel as a sudden lover to:
old Reykjavik. Then, quick, hot
Old San Juan and wild Tokyo.

Why,
why cling to the geography of love?
I do not know, Dear Friends—
or why I'll hang before I'll quit.

Nobody goes for pain or wants to
in his right mind
dish out hurt. (Forgive my tonal change.
Bear with me.)

That vista, though! Come with me
to try and try, wet feet, rain
coming parallel—not freezing yet
our luck—stepping our mud.

A MONDAY IN PORT AU PRINCE

4:00 a.m.

Chickens
dogs
chanting in from hills.

10:00 a.m.

Phillip, Fritz,
yellow-red
tab-tab.

10:45 a.m.

Yellow-red tab-tab
and we
arrive far out.

11:00 a.m.

Happy chicks
eat up coconut
after we drink milk.

11:15 a.m.

Outside bar
just ten steps
over there.

11:30 a.m.

Rum time! Big Mama
shakes toward
carnival.

Noon

Redlips Marie
& her body smile
from flowered red.

1:00 p.m.

Feed her rice
& rum while her
feet play my leg.

2:00 p.m.

Laughter stops,
quiet, fear.
A Ton-ton is here.

2:30 p.m.

Big Mama lays a
bottle on him free.

3:00 p.m.

The ships, the fiships
grace and gray sails
nets out.

3:30 p.m.

Flat ocean &
mountains darken
clucks hen
fat chicks
back at
coconut.
Rum gone, we're
near.

4:00 p.m.

Tab-tab home
yellow-red
Fritz, Phillip.

4:30 p.m.

Dusty, tired
happy, tight
3 sights!

5:00 p.m.

At the gate
Aggie waits his
smile a sphynxmelter.

6:00 p.m.

Shower busted
sweat black
rum, rum
cock-a-doodle
dogpack
oooo-oooo
sweet day.

HOTEL CERVANTES, S.D.

Let's to the Prado and make the most of time

—Robert Browning

I.

Santo Domingo, a hot
eleven o'clock start
after breakfast
for Boca Chica Beach—
no *tro-tro*, no *tab-tab*, still
essential *publica* wheels
(two bits around town, two dollars
for two to Boca Chica Playa).

In five colors "America The Beautiful"
says the decal on the dash.
Old Fernandez, driver, laughs.
"Because I can't afford no radio," he says.
My friend, José, proud in directorship
stirs to discuss his camera's virtues.
The Dominican murders in New York
dominate back seat talk.
Why did the killers pick out
Dominicans only? And
the jammed, old Honda catapults the
question, tears along the most
beautiful ocean,
palms and blue,
palms and lapis blue: Everyday.
Murders in New York are, too—
but not singled-out Dominicans.

And then we're there
and swim despite forgotten towels,
and, salty, loll
and swim again.
Back on the sand I take a smug delight
that the six-year-old on the donkey
refuses the New Jersey lawyer's money.
He was smiling, thanks, because he
felt like smiling, thanks. His
little brother, about three, is fun. The
bay is beautiful; friendly (barrier reef,
no sharks). And if it pleased

the lawyer, then his wife, and sister-in-law
to take the picture, it was their
pleasure and it makes him happy and when
you are happy you smile, mister.
He looks right past the handed dollars.
They are invisible.

II.

President Guzman was a complete charmer last night
on TV. I was afraid to come here last summer
at his inauguration time. The military, said the
press, might keep him out. (Marines have landed, yep!)
So now
I am a bit surprised by the on-screen military
presence flanking him.
This town seems a happy place to me
—so did Beirut eleven years ago.
For sure the cops are easy, friendly guys.
They were in Beirut, too.

The Pope, John Paul—John Paul The Two—
he kissed the ground here recently,
near Colon Square, I think.
I think: The Pope, and then
Columbus, Colomb. Colon.
The outsider who accomplishes,
who voyages, and I do not mean mere travel,
is not immune to politics' brutality: That's fantasy.
The cowardly, the lazy
sometimes are.
And are the wise the old?
What makes you think so?
Are the sharp the young?
It is not so simple.
And what is a "fool's errand?" I ask.
And what indeed is seeding
the future?
Oh, well.
We go.

III.

José's amigo, also named José,
joins us back in the city,
climbs us up a side hill to a ruin.

"Here are the leg irons" (rusted).
A Catholic Baalbec, I think, silently
and recall the levelled temple of
Venus there; Mars and Jupiter still up.
Now in the ancient, ruined courtyard check
the older-than-death underground. Cistern here;
dungeon there. (O welded church-and-state.)
"They kept the mad ones here," says José Two,
smiling and making goofy noises,
making his handsome face turn odd.

Columbus **IS** this city!
St. Christopher, indeed. What a paradox—
the traveller's saint. And does
my smiling friend know that Colon also
knew his dungeons very well?

VI.

The sun will soon enough head down.
Going 'home'—the two—Sir José First, Sir Ron
then stop to watch a chained
Iguana in a circle of people.
It is being yelled at by its captor.
The man is shouting nonstop at his captive.
The crowd, despite the hour, grows. We leave.
Somehow it all connects.

In Santo Domingo, hungry with twilight
we walk our mile or so,
sticky with sweat and sea salt,
to The Cervantes now, at supertime.
Sancho
and What's-His-Name.

BASSETERRE

I.

Not to chronicle hours
the major lesson.

II.

"Good-good," Doc clips it.
Oh yes,
a little good is left.
"Please pass the spam."

III.

Don, Bumpy, LeRoys I & II
Tutt, Oinee, others on
some roads, and to unique
degrees.
The 13 children, and she preg-
nant again. & in the "outer
world" bad news of
Bhutto, Bakhtiar.

IV.

Alexander Hamilton. Lord
Nelson's Church, the manor
perched on the small mountain
(Nevis). Jo-Jo throwing
the big black pig into
the ferry's stowage.
Images. Trussings up. I
know how important *some*
bleedings are:
Greenland. Cariboo. Nevis.

Taste. Palate.
And what *is* education?
(Bakhtiar. Bhutto.
Where all the good men end?)
I wept and Cecil asked
"Did you know him?"
"I think so," I said.

Oh yes, My Valentine,
too well.
Maybe you do too.
No clothes affordable.
13 babies.

*Something wants love and
something wants governing.
The sun is good, but
not quite wise enough.*

GOODBYE ALWAYS SETTLING

(*I. M. Florence Mary Cochran*)

Mother, I "never"
dream in color
& you don't need
taxis in Old San Juan

But there you were in
a spring-time yellow dress
hurrying along
along a block from
Ponce deLeon's church
off to a tea or something
to be nice to people
—that's for sure—
& smiling as
almost always.

I was standing
on the sidewalk
in the middle of a gossip
with my lover

& I said, "Just half a minute,"
& you said, "That's
all right, Dear.
Finish your talk,
but I am in a real rush.
No problem; I'll catch
this cab and see you
this evening."

As Mr. Chaucer said,
"Yis."

PORT AU PRINCE MORNING

Halfway to where we were
yesterday for rum
at Big Mama's
we *tab-tab* out.
A daytime bar, a lame bartender.
Lots of girls. Hell, and not yet noon.
She's Lydia, she says, and will
not go away, does not speak French
—a temporary from Santo Domingo—
and will not be ignored by me
as she seems to be by her
Creole sisters
We note El Papa kissed the ground
in her own town last week.
She grabs my
rosary.
I surge with generosity,
having said "no" so much.
"My wife's at the hotel,"
I say. "I cannot go with you
—would you like this?
memento!"

It half works. You will wear
it proud you say,
give it to your Mother
finally.
Observant Philipe, who's
been so silent, thanks me suddenly
in the other ear
for being kind to you.
Backpaddle, wash and watch.
It works a little while.
Then Lydia assures
my wife will not be wiser
nor ill served if we have sex.
I put the rosary around her
neck, get straight with God.
"It is from Italy.
He from Poland," I mumble.
My rummy head thinks cosmically
—"or is he?"
That I have no *bambinos*
bothers her.
The room croons, "Yes, you do."

II.

YOU POOR BASTARD

(to Rundy & Wave)

*What's love got to do with
respectability?* —Faulkner

Vilia miretur vulgus. —Martial

*Coercion . . . has made one half
of the world fools and the other
half hypocrites.* —Jefferson

WELL I LOST

everything you gave me—
the pen in Dublin
at the Post Office,

your letter back in
London,
your address in
Philadelphia.

You poor bastard,
you'll never hear
from me again.

JUST A LYRIC FOR LEO

Sometimes I feel
like a mother-
less toe,

O sometimes I feel
like a motherless
toe,

Yeh, sometimes I feel
like a mother-
less toe,

O why the sock it
has to have
a public hole?

GEOGRAPHIES OF THE MORAL BRUTE

Lawyer: Look, she's left hairpins all over the floor again.

Officer: So he has discovered the hairpins too.

—Strindberg: “*A Dream Play*”

I. (Northern Virginal)

“Kiss me
til I bleed,”
she said.

I did.
She bled.

II. (Southern Virginal)

She pled
“Hump me
til ah faint.”

Ah trahd.
Ah kaint.

III. (Universal Virginal)

Our only health
is our disease?

Heaven help us to the
Sulpha, please.

DAVID'S REPORT OF A DUKE
UNIVERSITY POETRY READING

Three persons coupled
like worm on worm
as Creeley read & waved a hand
& I thought I detected a whif of sperm
& scanned the faces
woman to man & looked for traces
to confirm.
But if anyone spilt under the gun
of the "pubic words," as Tex wd say,
nobody, nobody
gave it away.

(1971)

HOMAGE TO ROD McEWEN,
E. A. GUEST & MRS. BROWNING

When I consider how my life
has been
before my brain has teamed up
with my pen
I rue the ruck and welter,
toil and strife,
and take Professor Gluck's
Beginning Creative Writing Course
once again.

TWO FOR JONATHAN WILLIAMS

I.

*Found Objects: The Writer Discovered Trying
To Whitmanize Himself In The University
Of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill*

A.

Scholars to come! Orators, artists,
musicians to come!

Ph.Ds. to come . . .

Come, come, come, come, come to the
card cat-a-log, at The Old U's Li-bray-ree

(&c)

Come to the guide, scholars pale . . .

(&c)

B.

1. "Bayes and Minimax Procedures in
Sampling from Finite Populations."
2. "Bayes' Estimation of Proportions."
3. "A Bayes two-stage test for
The Mean, Some Proportions of."
4. "Bayesian Decision Problems."
5. "A Bayesian Indifference Procedure."

C.

All together—forward & back & do-see-do.

II.

MIZ BARBARA TO THE DARK MICROPHONE CAME

& she say (19 Jan 69)

"Almost
anything
if it's edible

can be attractive,"
Enuf to whiplash The Colonel, like
"Linger-fickin'
Goooooooooooood!"

WALKING ON EGGS

(Rangoon)

We disembark.
The only man
at the foot of the
ramp is sharp;
salutes.
“Good morning, Sir!”
he says.
(It's 12:05 a.m.)
Fourteen carbines
shoulder-slung
aisle our walk—
the muzzles straight are
black against
the piled clouds.
Exile hour.

Inside the terminal
more guns in
corners & yet I
see on two, three
saffron faces
smiles that make me
think of yours
before you turned your
back in Tokyo—what?
ten hours or twelve before—
Walking away without
a wave or one look
back. I think:
I think I like
the gunner
at the foot of this
foreign ramp
better than you.

Alas, alas, mon cher
chrysanthemum,
The world, she screw.

(1968-1977)

I KNOW YOU'RE FUN DOROTHY,
BUT I STILL BROOD NOW & THEN

Miss Parker, let's get the tickle
more explicit.
Here is my wrist.

No confidence, no blade?
Well, test the
rope or provide

Graphic promise
of sal-
vation.

Or, Dear, torture out a
pup again, a cute
vulnerable, wobblekneed hope.

Direct it straight to
tackle Emotion at
her invitation.

Wrest *something*
out of mundanity
red, howling, new!

Wind snickers Dorothy's answer:
"You mew, Darling—
and you mewl."

RUDYARD KIPLING STREAKS

(to Martin Duberman)

Headmaster rough on Rudyard-o
he druv the Massa (kist) to
Mandalayzian mist.

The leading Kingly Light
doth undermine the
Knight.

And done reading good for good
in white duck office wear
today is understood.

Unburdened we race bare.

GENERAL JOHN REVIEWS
FRIDAY THE THIRTEENTH

Damn it,
these days
the only poems I write
seem to be about
dead people.
But then
half of my friends are
dead, and
I don't like
to talk
about strangers.

GENERAL JOHN MEDITATES
ON BEING LONELY

Absence makes
the heart grow
teeth.

DINNER FOR TWO

Butcher Man,
you said to boil
the croaker head 5 minutes
and my cat would
absolutely love it.

I guess I'm chickenlivered,
but when the cooking croaker's
eyes turned white
I nearly
puked.

But I went through with it!
My cat turned
his nose up
at the tenderness
and lack of blood.

(How many times
I should have done!)

THE CASTING ROOM

(for Ann and Arthur)

I. (Miss Kopple)

She sliced
light, center
to right.

The fevers had
once sung for her,
he waits for them.

II. (Mr. Delicado)

No matter the
huge white
spaces

He knew
he was a poet
so

Had the printer
decorate with as-
terisks

Big
as
dollars.

III. (Mr. Arrow)

Watched himself
get heavy in the chest
& fat desire
diminish by half.

Watched himself back
against
the brick
wall.

It has been some months.
Pupils glint olive.
Face fine & thin
again.

IV. (Miss Anatomic)

For only
a slight
fee
could have
had a
Notary Public's
seal
on
her
refusal.

MME DeSADE'S
BINGO PARLOR

*I, John Letsome, purges, bleeds & sweats 'em
& if after that they wants to die, then I John, letsome.*

—from an essay by John Parramore

If it had been a razor,
Dear, my hand and pen hastening on
to underline that kiss-off line
of yours
would have left me a
pointer finger poorer and
blood all over these pages.

Buffoon, ne?
All, all over
the ice.

The back of my head
striking against the bars.

Somebody saying
"Poor Baby."

Such
is the victory.

The cosmic laughter
Har har hars.

III.

TOKYO PILLOW

To Emory in Edo

*I realize that human life is limited,
but I would like to live forever.*

—Yukio Mishima

*Oh watch how the arms
of the clock are turning.*

—Drummond Hadley

THE DAY BEFORE YOU GAVE ME
THE PORTAIT OF GIRLS FISHING

I was on the train
running parallels,
found a dozen or more
years,
thought on that Iceland bus
that ran on counterclockwise
24 hours every day
and that long trip
from Chicago to
Iowa City in midsummer.
On the way to see you!
Fuchu
Shinjuku
Shibuyaku
Rails singing me into
Jingumae.

ALONE

Cats
& chickens.
My fingers are
bamboo.

Ah, Parishoners,
one gropes months
in the hours
before dawn.

We are like
the osage orange
between Umapine
& Wallula.

SPRING MORNING, SUMMER NIGHT

I.

Evenly
fog parts and
you are again lovely
as a fresh
hill lady is.

II.

High mountains
we hear you
over our lake fireworks.
How welcome!

RETURNING IN JANUARY

And two years gone
yet you remember me!

We both sense the love
who never “met.”

Promises are made
before new leaving

And saying words
we will hold to is joy

These petals will not drop,
time or not.

I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU

I thought it
was you
turning in bed—listening
I know
it is just the rain, heavier.

First I've heard
in a long time—
breathe deep.
I rest easier.
Happily.

Floods?
I doubt it,
if so
we'll cope later,
in due time.

barely started in Kaname Dori at Shire
or Bokshin
or the Regent.
Go to Hell!

V.

Two days left and
Hiro again appears. Hiro—four feet nine and 21.
Shattered dreams, shakey future
and several arrests. And as if that weren't
enough, the girlfriend is loyal,
and her Dad's a *banker*. You, Hiro? Your
Pop's a mere salesman.

Well, my reformed glue addict, as
tough and high hearted as you are,
with a girl like Nori, I'm damned
if I don't think
you'll make it.

I'd like to have seen you on that campus
soapbox
talking right-wing politics through your
bullhorn, crying out for a student strike—
and half a block away Nori on her soapbox,
urging pacific socialism and no-strike
into hers.

And it was, after all, Jesuit Sophia U.,
and what did the good Fathers think?
And did you two giggle and run
from it when the others began punching?

The last time we rally
you hand me the goodbye package, opaque cellophane;
inside is Mishima's *Golden Pavilion*, first edition,
which of course you couldn't afford.
What can I say, my friend?
Good luck on the next set of odds.

It opened my adrenalin to flood
to be paged by name in Haneda, all over
Haneda, 30 minutes before the posted boarding

time. I'd thought there was civil time left to linger over a drink with Minoru, keep our plan to be contained and "mature."

It was seemingly working. Then the p.a. and everything crunched in. Like a beautiful gift you hear break in the bag.

DAWN IN OMOTESANDO

Six a.m.

loud grandfather

clock in your six-mat room

always 45 minutes off

always very loud

this sleeplessness

while you sleep

through.

MAKURA-KOTOBA

Our coming together from far ends
amazes us both,
neither knowing the other
was cowardly too,
two years ago,
now we confess it, laughing.

We joy in such presence
my cynical dear:
we are in love,
knowing it usually passes
with flowers and years—
still honoring it.

On waking at four
by your beautiful person
I listened
to your heavy breathing
two hours with no wish to sleep:
I refused to sleep.
With sun through shades
at nine I woke again,
saw the perfect flower
of your ear on my inner arm,
pressed into it. Celebrated
quietly another hour.

Now we part with hot coffee
and without grief
planning, instead of tears,
outrageous attacks on future years
to keep our hearts as dry as wit
whatever our eyes think of it.

LIKENESS

The flame rises up
The hand in flame of hearth.

This is the salamander
& under his self

The hand now turtles
Out of neck shell, claw

Daring the book
Assuming the hardest protector.

Now!
Flame in a proper balance—

Not unlike the Lord Buddah
Under the great serpents

At Angkor.

SAMURAI

They who see me shadow
See me as they see me.

I compel—hell take the end—
In whispers see me.

I am both my Lord's Lord and
The truth of beauty. See me.

Ultimately to be seen as I am,
Ultimately. Meantime, blind

Let them try on their coffins
If it comforts them.

My shadow shadows
Such as honor beauty and honor

To the end.
And my Lord is my Lord.

KUNEO

I. New Mazda

Orange
odor softens
Tuesday night chill,
you waiting me in
your first car, smile.

This is all new
to both of us.
Lights go on, then
we go together
into the night.

II. Item

They butcher porpoises
in the bay
off Nago, North
Okinawa.

The slaughter makes
the waters of sea red
as new cherries,
Kuneo said.

Many come to watch
each year.

THAT DAY IN THE SHADOW OF APOLLO

Yukio, you in the garden were looking at the roses.

Suddenly,
the boy was there again. You noticed him—in his school
uniform.

Not as you or I would have it. Grungy, middleclass,
kind of ugly.

Not rich-cut or sharp, not threadbare, boneclean
and sharp.

Came back four days in a row. You knew now
it would go on.

Holy Pinter! So: five strides eye-to-eye
you put it:

“Ask any single question. I’ll answer it if
you’ll go away.”

And then, finally, you gave him—the odd kid—
your smile, your incomparable smile.

“OK,” he said (no smile).

“When are you going to kill yourself?”

AS HE IS

Between Trini Lopez
at Kanami Dori
& the appointment in Ginza
lie twenty minutes.
Twenty lenten years
standing on the
subway.

IMPRINTS

I. Kaname Dori

It's Akira The Hun!
And we talk of whoring,
bad season in Yokohama,
my old lover.

You had
bad luck all day yesterday
in Yokohama.
We drink

To
old lovers,
ourselves,
Yokohama. Tomorrow.

II. The Novelist in Azabu

Raising the song,
the fine face to the light,
we listen to Mozart and talk death.
"There is no ending. One stops."
I read the tide in your face like a book.

III. Irish Writer in Akasaka

Rain. Wet. The air lonely.
Where you are in heart's wish there
is a peat fire, its own kind of courage.
Not humid passion. A bright
against bone cold.

IV. Harajaku

Mind a tentative string,
trying for tone.
Waking at three,
Teru
Teruo
Teru, Te . . .

A different year but
the love has not changed.

How splendid
the sound of rain tonight.

SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

And so you woke and wondered
and were afraid last night alone
pitched into considerations of *who* and *if*
and if there is a home
any are quiet in.
“It is sincerely to be hoped
that these childish recycles of worry
won’t be repeated often.”

The windows are tin.
There has been no rain in Tokyo for 57 days.
The city, you are told, is like a tinder box.
You fool romantics dwell
on painful, passionate ends.

END OF SUMMER

Hakone,
over cable too long
over the sulfur pots
broiling hearts' rinds
already brown.

& in Yotsuya
I heard of
happy unhappy
neither & open
endings.

MICHIYUKI

Koga, Koga
where are you
now that I
needja?

To go out
of the Ark
also needs extreme
love and aid.

BAMBOO MAP

I.

"& yours my wrestler
is the soul of a
musician.
& I so obtuse
in all the ways."

II.

What did you think?

"I
admired him."

FUNCTIONS

"Don't you scare me"—Prince Hiro, about four years

"Please, may I go paddle in the mud?"
asked Napoleon's son, who did not cry at 3
on parade in public, first time his daddy
forced him into that dumb gaze, under the trumpets.
Did not cry, even on that huge and monster horse.

"You were grand, my son, splendid little man. Anything
you wish is yours."

"Please, may I go paddle in the mud?"
O DeSade,
O Freud,
All this unnecessary nonsense

O professors, pedagogues, preachers,
salon-eests, stupideos,
revolutionists.

Architects in
kind
are all/that matter.

Having won all races, the race
is elemental joy,
not contortion; straight
incision for healthy recovery by
intelligent doctors. "No twisty thoughts."
Clean knife.
Shaman knowing function.

Function placing
proper worship
current & back & ahead.
& one recalls E.P. quoting Nap's words,
"First element, mud."

The good of gold & silver & steel: lasting
roads, aquaducts. & simplicity, single flowers,
& clean plaques,
honoring.

MISS GRINELDA LEE FARQUHAR WRITES TO
APARTMENT 1, FUJI MANSION

(*For Tennessee*)

Dear Cousin T-Tom:

That time why, good heavens, we'd not seen each other for over two years. At the extreme, between Sondrestrom and Tokyo, it had been twenty, though, so two was nothing. And they were never, never dull, always some new drapes or later on in Nippon Fukui taking us off to a Bouquet Bar with one of his mistresses, something just like that!

Of course, nattering as *we* do, we always ticked off the changes since last, like Countess Ruth and the City without her here; Prince William, hardly adult, his violent death by aeroplane and the one dear one through suicide—two through cancer—and those several removed to the continent of John Calvin and the Mafia.

It's some little cry, now, from when Princess Suga and the Belgian Ambassador costumed themselves to scandal and you put out word that I was involved with the son of the Moroccan Ambassador. The very idea! (Though it delighted me secretly, my name being spelt right in the *Jay-Pan Times* the very next day. Until he appeared with red hair and freckles and a *Brooklyn* accent.

Really you *were* evil.) And, oh, yes! My delivery of the treats for the party before St. George's Ball and all lost with me in taxi, so late, so, so late—but Kassim's father charmingly cool and there with a case of champagne.

If we *have* to escape *some* memories, not those! And any-way

let's go in a white-topped car, easy to follow, full-tilt round the traffic circle, maybe right in-to

the pursuers and if there aren't any pursuers we may just have to (*de facto*!) create some. But, T-Tom, *anything* to forget (how-ever briefly, My Dear) that years, years are yet the pursuers of women and men and it's better form to turn over in a *real* tactic than

stumble

running away, or *worse*, back. But not to worry, Love.

And *believe* me ever to be Yours,

GRINELDA LEE

AUGUST PILLOW: *a Tokyo Notebook*

I.

The accordian bands in the street!
Punctuation of these summer days
before the rains,
before the dances of the people at o-bon
at night before the shrine
—a little climb above the tori, Akasaka,
where we were last year
before the lithe and naked boy
drumming constantly
under the lanterns
sweating and smiling foot to foot.

We wake in the dark before dawn and
even before I am sure
your voice is rich with Verlaine,
soft, clear.
Under your hands and dreams I am happy.

I also understand faces turned
to walls, to die.

Your
Saint Sebastian: Ordeal by Roses
Sebastian Venable
Sebastian Melmoth
Sebastian Flight.
Night knowing night.

If butterflies
could have barristers,
what a lawyer Mitomi!

Bomepinsudet, *you* want to go
into international law?
Your face is suddenly serious
in the noisy dance bar.
The jape, the jibe vanish.
The mask at last is down!
Is it that you're half Irish?
Hiro and Nori! Here you are again. Sheer
accident, 2 years later outside a movie in
Ginza, and a Hari Krishna from

Fayetteville, Nawth Kay-line-uh and me &
11 million other souls in the city!

Ruth takes me to the cabaret to see
Cha-Cha San on stage. Now I have
only seen Cha-Cha San off-stage at
Mike's Bar and one party; have been
much impressed by the langue, and I like
Cha-Cha's favorite phrase,
"Goddamnsonovabitch." I prefer it to the current
"Ya-know?-ya-know" street and student lingo.

Now Cha-Cha flicks a
sharp, bright smile
as only the snake god has.
"We shall see," we say, despite ourselves,
drawn to a fearful grace that's far from funny.

"Goddamnsonovabitch' I want to make
it to the United States. On my
acting. I been to Los Angeles once."
Tonight the snake god's spirit
is undying once again, wears a top-
hat, mahogany cane glitters, points
at me, *at me* from the stage. Among hundreds
am I ever proud! Goddamnsonovabitch,
me, the worst-dressed paleface in the
bloody Tokyo Hilton.

It's the hound-dog, Fame, we're
a-hunting!
—Let the silly bitch come to
bay.

Curl to my arm,
avert harm here
this night.
Wear this amulet.

Quiet, quiet the words.
You are tired, so tired.
You can't stay awake.
Tell my fortune
with your new book
tomorrow.

II.

It starts to quake; six p.m. Did Kimi-san tell me
to stand between the doorposts or away from
the door posts if there was a quake? I duck in the
corner, under a small desk.

Ruth makes most Tokyo taxi drivers seem benign!

We arrive OK, though, from Kimi-san's house
across the swish-swash of cars in cold rain
to see the bonny Blue Tigers, her current fancy
at the Club Speed, in Roppongi.

The Tigers seem pretty
darned tame for a fag hi group,
dancing limply together, nonplussed and nilly,
at most keen-absorbed in their Amurrikan
backup man, soloist.

Oh!

he do twist him ersatz

joy shout!

He fellates and finally humps his guitar.

The latter is safer because it's electric.

"The planets are ours," screams

The Leader.

And all this we paid thru the nose for?

Sweet Genji!

Roppongi, Roppongi,

put up your hair.

III.

Five o'clock rush in Shibuya-ku. Delight of late afternoon
warm, the sun has a few (maybe 20) moments of rich tones
left. I'm lost but unscheduled. Mellowed than not.
As usual at such an hour it's noisy and crowded. A Kid—
probably 18—is on an outside phone calling his girl.
It's a pretty tough assignment under these circumstances.
With a million noises and sights and faces and incidents
and general motion in this movieset color, and happily
fuddled and lost, as I said, I'm arrested anyway. His
face and intensity! I take out my pad. What a metaphor:

*Love
should still
be hanging
on the
phone*

I scratch it on the five-by-three paper. And then
I have to laugh. I'm trying to be Shelley and it
comes out Thurber. And besides it *is* a picture,
and with these simple lines it just comes out cartoon.
And anyway my egghead friends will tell me Bergson
will never let the receiver be put down, thank you.

*Is anyone
ever exactly
at the other end
of the
line?*

Having got a fish cartoon this time, I think I'd better
get back to Hobbes and leave off Bergson for now.

The kid
finally hangs up. The glow goes. And there's
a Kirin Beer Hall.

Ah! In the beer hall I sit alone
& watch the 80-year-old dude
& his 20-year-old girlfriend.

All this jazz about the calm, precise Japanese!
The vertical society creates this illusion,
at best a half-truth. *E.g.*, when the waiter fired
the souffle at the wrong time at
Maxim de Paris' de Tokyo and threw it
away to keep himself from being consumed in flame,
chucking it right at Ruth, who,
supra, ducked—just in time.

IV.

I didn't cry or rage when you went out last hour,
with no explanation. From 10 on til 11:30 I'd
watched you dress and preen and watched you watch
me whirl in a dumb anguish as you stood in front of
the mirror.
"You don't mind, do you, Darling?" you finally said.
And then the door shut.
Love or hate it sure botches supper. But the action's

barely started in Kaname Dori at Shire
or Bokshin
or the Regent.
Go to Hell!

V.

Two days left and
Hiro again appears. Hiro—four feet nine and 21.
Shattered dreams, shakey future
and several arrests. And as if that weren't
enough, the girlfriend is loyal,
and her Dad's a *banker*. You, Hiro? Your
Pop's a mere salesman.

Well, my reformed glue addict, as
tough and high hearted as you are,
with a girl like Nori, I'm damned
if I don't think
you'll make it.

I'd like to have seen you on that campus
soapbox
talking right-wing politics through your
bullhorn, crying out for a student strike—
and half a block away Nori on her soapbox,
urging pacific socialism and no-strike
into hers.

And it was, after all, Jesuit Sophia U.,
and what did the good Fathers think?
And did you two giggle and run
from it when the others began punching?

The last time we rally
you hand me the goodbye package, opaque cellophane;
inside is Mishima's *Golden Pavilion*, first edition,
which of course you couldn't afford.
What can I say, my friend?
Good luck on the next set of odds.

It opened my adrenalin to flood
to be paged by name in Haneda, all over
Haneda, 30 minutes before the posted boarding

time. I'd thought there was civil time left to linger over a drink with Minoru, keep our plan to be contained and "mature."

It was seemingly working. Then the p.a. and everything crunched in. Like a beautiful gift you hear break in the bag.

REGENT TO SUN ROUTE

You wrote me
"I am Orange"
&
"I am Orange"

& we never could
get touch again.

Why did you send me that
beautiful poem, Orange?
To remind me of one magic trip
from The Regent to "home?"
Unplanned same hotel,
our night?

Poem on a postcard
over six months later
. . . you suddenly in the U.S.

You don't hurt me, never did
but you haunt me, haunt me
Orange, Orange keen-eye, Orange poet.

To tell it true
I hope you always will.
Such good ghosts are too
seldom, far too seldom
far too few.

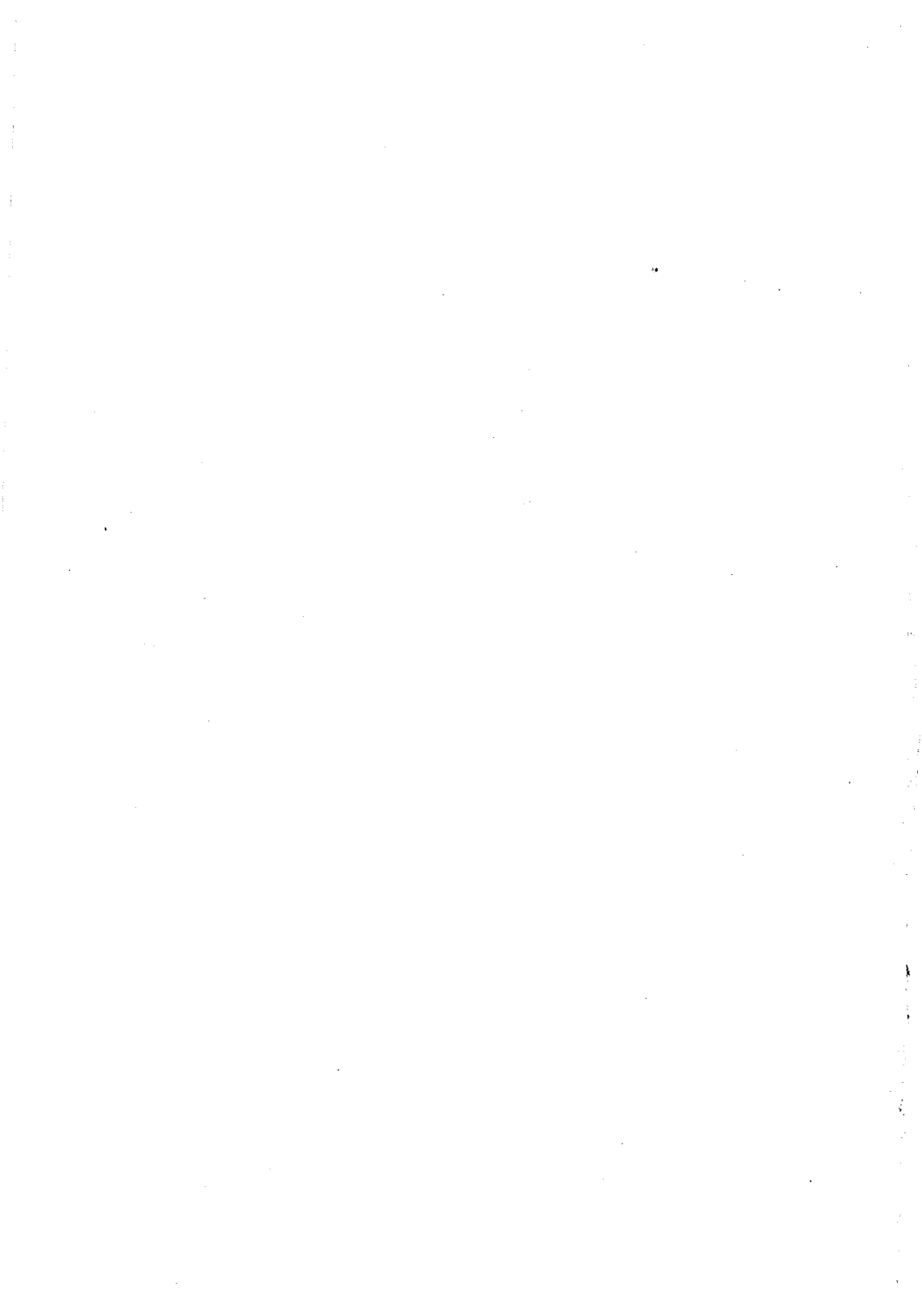


ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ronald H. Bayes was born in Oregon in 1932, was raised in the town of Umapine and attended Eastern Oregon College, where he later taught and did graduate study. He did further graduate study at Colorado State University, the University of Pennsylvania (as a Woodrow Wilson National Fellow), The University of British Columbia, and Trinity College (Dublin). He was stationed in Iceland in 1956-58 with the U.S. Infantry as a member of the 2d Battalion Combat Team.

He has been writer-in-residence at St. Andrews Presbyterian College since 1968, prior to that teaching with The University of Maryland's University College. Bayes has lived in Japan on three occasions and has translated modern Japanese verse with Yozo Shibuya, Megumu Yamakawa and Nobuaki Sumomogi.

Rolfe Humphries, Charles Olson, Carolyn Kizer and Robert Creeley are among the contemporary poets with whom he has studied. His works for the stage include *An Evening With Ezra Pound* and *An Evening With William Carlos Williams* and he has written a monograph of literary criticism, *John Reed and The Limits of Idealism*, as well as over a dozen books of poetry, the most recent of which is *Fram*, the concluding work of his *UMAPINE TETRALOGY*. He is founding editor of *St. Andrews Review* and *St. Andrews Press* and first holder of the Yeats Chair of Poetry at Brunnenburg, Italy (1977). Bayes was honored by the Accademia Italia in 1982 and participated in the Europäische Akademie Berlin invitational seminar in 1983. He is presently finishing a volume of short fiction.



EPILOGUE: FOUNTAIN

"Uncle Jed," I said

"That spiffy dresser over there,
he say he Ponce deLeon."

"Ah don't care what he's got on

Boy, but yew
git right over there
an' you ask him
where he buys his booze"

I like Baycs' poems a lot; I like his experimentalism, and his imagination is questing and lively.

—JAMES DICKEY

Bayes does have "a beast in view" with this new collection, and it is none other than our late, lamented decade, the 'Seventies.' I'm impressed by these bright celebrations, not only for their warmth and humor, but also for their craft. These poems sing, for Bayes unerringly locates the fugitive, radiant moments when, as Virginia Woolf insisted, we truly lived.

—DAVID RIGSBEE

I see Bayes' mind moving and this momentum is sometimes lyrical, sometime topical, but always fascinating—which must mean he, himself, is . . . compassionate, warm, loving, and intelligent. Can anyone expect a human being to be more? But to get it all down *verbatim*, so someone else can follow is quite a feat!

—HELEN LUSTER

At times wry, terse, or funny, Bayes' poetry reflects the stillness of nature, mirrored by understanding; and it echoes a tender, tragic search for a "home any are quiet in."

—MARTIN ROBBINS

the poetry of ron bayes has always been rich, perceptive, witty, moving. "A Beast In View" keeps extending the limits he deals with while maintaining the strengths. in other words there's always more to tell me about that i need to hear. i'm jealous and delighted at how real language, puns, and "lit'ry" merge, touch, shy away from each other to make this good music.

—joel oppenheimer

Ronald H. Baycs has been praised by William Carlos Williams, James Merrill, Harry Meacham, among others. It's easy to see why.

—SIMON PERCHIK

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